

JOSÉ FERRER CANALES

HUMANIST OF THE YEAR 1997



Master Conference

HOSTOS AND GINER

Originally we planned to celebrate this event around October 24 – anniversary of Rafael Cordero's birth— in order to pay tribute to this black teacher, democrat, and Christian but it was not possible. We all know that Cordero was born in 1790 and that in 1810 he founded a school in Luna Street in historical San Juan in which he educated poor and rich children, black and white. He was more than a century and a quarter ahead of U.S. jurisprudence, which waited until 1954, to proclaim justice and virtue of the integrity of races in public schools in the voice of Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Earl Warren. It is pleasant for me to remember this in this week when we evoke Martin Luther King, whom I heard say: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood". We know Cordero had the glory of having among his disciples figures of the intellectual and patriotic hierarchy of Baldorioty de Castro, Sotero Figueroa, Manuel de Elzaburu, and Alejandro Tapia y Rivera, father of national arts.

I am honored with an extraordinary award –which I consider excessive– I would like to go over the parallelism that exists between the brilliant figures of Hostos and Giner de los Ríos. Thanks to the Puerto Rican Endowment for the Humanities, I aspire and look forward to the spread of ideology, of the vision of man and the concept of life that were bequeathed by those two apostles of Latin American, West Indian, Hispanic, and universal culture.

Hostos and Giner: These are two sculptors of souls, two sculptors of conscience, guided by a single constellation of ideas of truth, good, liberty, and justice. Distinguished figures of civility and culture, teachers in the Socratic tradition, they included with the example of their clear and heroic lives, with warm and live voices, with what Giner called the holy sacrament of words, and with their prose, their written message. When our countries and young people want to reaffirm their rights, when they want to find paradigms, examples of moral integrity, when they seek apostles to take refuge in and in whose shade to grow in the order of civility, dignity, and liberty, they find in the wise Eugenio María de Hostos and in the secular saint, the live gospel of Francisco Giner de los Ríos, twin souls of teachers and patriots.

The same ethical and human values and the same clear wisdom guided their lives. Giner and Hostos, –Hispanic teacher and Latin American thinker born in Puerto Rico– had the same concepts of science and conscience, liberty and law, duties and justice. Life is to both of them, using one of Hostos' phrases, the fulfillment of a duty, and teaching, an almighty mission.

Critics who have piercing looks have seen the affinity between these two noble figures, among others: José Gaos, Carlos Arturo Torres, and Alberto Zum Felde. In addition, Juan José Arrom emphasizes how "in a rigorous chronology of Giner de los Ríos (who) lived from 1839 to 1915 there was in America a parallel in age and profession: philosopher and educator Hostos, who lived 1839-1903".

And my unforgettable professor, Antonio S. Pedreira, says:

Hostos was educated in Spain and was a disciple of Julián Sanz del Río and peer of Salmerón, Azcárate, and Francisco Giner de los Ríos. Whoever knows the educational reform that was implemented in Spain by the latter, teacher of teachers, will better understand the one that with less luck Hostos began in Santo Domingo at the same time when the Free Institute of Education opened its doors. Giner and Hostos have an identical educational ideal and even the moral strength with which they preached it is alike.

Pedro Henríquez Ureña met him in his Caribbean country and describes the wise Puerto Rican as stoic, severe, pure, and ardent and believes that his work is, intellectually and ethically considered like Bello's in Chile, Sarmiento's in Argentina, and Giner's in Spain.

Our humanist and thinker Domingo Marrero Navarro on pages about Ortega y Gasset, presents this problem we find in Spain's history of ideas. Marrero states:

Giner, ... is philosophically mentioned in a third-order German school: Krausism. Why, precisely when the great German idealist systems blossom... do men such as Sanz del Río, Giner, and Hostos joyfully accept the Krausist doctrines?

To be answered by affirming that Hispanic intellect takes in Spanish Krausism because it says: "it is eager for ethical and religious certainty... (and) it gives fervent welcome without going into considerations more or less snobbish over the hierarchy of European philosophical systems... Krausism was assigned in the philosophical criteria of the times". Marrero Navarro praises Hostos and Giner.

José Martí sees in Hostos' thought and style, evident footprints of the Krausist ideal and language. To Martí, our Hostos is imaginative but "calms the ardent fires of his islander fantasy in the study of the deepest principles".

I do not believe that Hostos' thought can be classified with great ease or that his life – a real moral ethopeia – could be categorized as the first philosophical or estheticism.

For me, Hostos is a thinker that coming from his Puerto Rican and Latin America roots and circumstances, receives the great incentive from Spanish Krausism – Krause, Sanz del Río, Giner –, and positivism, among other philosophical modalities; remember how he praised Augusto Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Lastarria. Krausism and positivism, and natural rights as expressed by humanist Dr. Aguedo Mojica... but when someone thinks they can imprison Hostos' untamable soul, they should read this confession in the illustrious Puerto Rican's *Diario!*: "imagination and feeling, the two creative forces of my soul."

That chapter of Hispanic history has been perfectly explained, among others, by: Adolfo Posada, Fernando de los Ríos, Pierre Jobit, Joaquín Xirau, John B. Trend, Juan López-Morillas, Roberto Agromonte, Rodolfo Llopis, Lorenzo Luzuriaga, Vicente Cacho Viú, and Jerónimo Mallo. Among the Puerto Rican critics who have studied the topic of Krausism, I should mention Antonio Cortón, Angel M. Mergal, Domingo Marrero Navarro, and Cesáreo Rosa Nieves.

In synthesis, what is Spanish Krausism? What notes characterize it? Suffice to remember, for this quick presentation, that Spanish Krausism – not the pure, German –, more than a hermetic set of principles or a pure philosophy, is an attitude, a method, a life style. It is a spiritual rebirth. It is a movement that aspires to the liberty of man; it aspires to wakening in him, a love for truth, a love for liberty.

In Krausism, we have a Pauline, interior religiousness; there is respect to the dignity of human beings; there is the interest, the reverence for that constellation of values we refer to when we talk about justice, beauty, and duties. Its cult to science, ethics, and its pedagogical orientation are obvious in the educational reform, initiated by these Hispanic teachers.

Julián Sanz del Río, according to the epistle by Emilio Castelar, was "a wise teacher that has studied the German science in Heidelberg and is today the Socrates of our

philosophical movement". The epithet "wise" and the evocation of Socrates in our philosophical movement. The epithet "wise" and the evocation of Socrates reveal the deep admiration that those men had for the Teacher from Torrearévalo, first Spaniard boarder, appointed History of Philosophy professor at the Universidad de Madrid on the condition that he would go to Germany; after his study trip, he returned to Spain and refused the position of university professor because he considered he lacked the necessary education, he retired to Illescas to meditate, study, and translate and adapt Krause. And he spent ten years there preparing himself – with the exception of his brief visits to Madrid.

Sanz occupies his position as professor at the Universidad de Madrid in 1854 and in 1857 he delivers that academic year's famous Inaugural Speech. In that speech, Sanz del Río expresses his aspiration for:

That history, which today is militant and cut in each step by oppositions and limitations, twisted and marred by indifference and selfishness, may one day be a harmonious history and life, true mother and teacher of its children, like a father to his children, as god of humanity.

Allow me other samples of Sanz del Río's thought; in that speech, he advises:

...never go against the right and respect owed to other men, classes, or institutions...; leave a trace of beautiful examples and doctrines after your name, and a spotless memory.

On more than one occasion, Hostos paid tribute to Giner and his Spaniard colleagues. In the prologue to *La peregrinación de Bayoán*, written in Santiago, Chile in June 1873, he mentions his gratitude for the praises that Giner made ten years earlier, when the first edition of that novel-diary appeared.

And in full controversy, in Santo Domingo, the Puerto Rican wrote:

...from the Universidad de Oviedo we have the pleasant memory of the noble thinker and man of good, Mr. Posada, intellectual friend; and from the Universidad Central de Madrid the warm memory of affectionate friends such as Giner de los Ríos, Azcárate, Linares, favorites of the heart and the conscience that have always seen in them the representatives of those Spaniards who, with their character, honor the human species.

Hostos talks about "the most illustrated generation that Spain has had, of which, Castelar was the word, Martos was the action, and Salmerón was the thought". Hostos saw in the revolution of September 1868, a new conscience and proclaim:

...the principle of academic freedom has been acknowledged; the need to make teaching objective and the object of study practical have been seen and respected; individual initiative has been developed in education and public instruction and it has been expressed in particular associations that have created the Free Institute of Education, the associations for establishing kindergartens and the free university in which the most outstanding thinkers in the new Spain, such as Salmerón, Giner, Azcárate teach...

When in 1867 Sanz del Río refused to sign the adherence to dynastic and religious faith as Marqués de Orovio expected, distinguished University professors such as Giner, Fernando de Castro, José María Maranges, Nicolás Salmerón, and Emilio Castelar adhered to his honest and brave attitude and civic decision. All of them were expelled from their professorships. But they would have the warm sympathy of 63 professors at Heidelberg University and of the First Congress of Philosophy in Prague in 1869. How did Hostos react then? What did that West Indian man express during that historical crisis?

Hostos' epistle has an exemplary letter, dated in Barcelona on January 16, 1868, sent to Sanz del Río:

My venerable teacher:

Blessed he who is persecuted for the truth...

Forgive them, Teacher: they do not know that they hurt themselves. They think that their wrongly-used weapons kill in men the idea that they hate, but they deceive themselves...

My beloved and venerable teacher, never more venerable than in these times of glorious proof; if I was in Madrid, to express the affection of my soul, I would extend my hand; to express my judgment, I would smile; but I would not speak... a single word.

Allow me, then, to be quiet, to smile, to squeeze your hand cordially.

With all my respect.

Eugenio María de Hostos

And to Nicolás Salmerón, Hostos writes:

...all of us who think for ourselves, are persecuted in you: shame on us if we didn't see in that persecution of powerful impotence the triumph of our cause, which is the invincible cause of the universal man.

Whoever suffers for truth and justice is my friend.

Giner de los Ríos admired and praised Hostos. In one of the epistles, reprinted thanks to Dr. Antonio S. Pedreira in 1934, Giner wrote to Hostos referring to the impression the book *Lecciones de Derecho Constitucional* (Lessons of Constitutional Law) had left in Spain.

Mr. Eugenio Ma. de Hostos

My beloved and old friend:

I am indebted to you... The impression your book has caused here has been excellent...

It is a serious work and full of deep interest.

As for me, I'm single, I continue to teach Philosophy of Law with more pleasure and interest each day, and at the same time, since 1876, when (because of being expelled from our professorships, Linares, Salmerón, Azcárate, other professors, and I) founded the Free Institute of Education in Madrid, I am dedicated with all my strength to the institute or, more so to elementary education, teaching in our school – a type of model school, completely private, although disconnected from all industrial spirit – writing in our Bulletin, trying to influence the government in order to achieve a reform especially in the sense of raising the level of primary teaching, where we want to gradually take the best of our youth...

Believe me, I am always hopeful of renovating and maintaining cordial relationships of other times, which are difficult to forget and you have my deepest esteem.

Francisco Giner de los Ríos

Every Puerto Rican pronounces the name of one of our greatest moral guarantors with reverence and ethical and historical emotion or, as Vicente Géigel Polanco said, "that man of exception" that we only deserve when we take "on the great ideal of his life and confirm it as rule of law and justice": Hostos

We have asked ourselves: Why do professors in Puerto Rico, pedagogy students in Puerto Rico, have to know educators such as Horacio Mann, Kilpatrick, and John Dewey, better than Latin American educators such as Andrés Bello, Sarmiento, Justo Sierra, González Prada, José Martí, and Hostos? Why don't professors in my native country, Island Mother, go to the eternal jets of moral, political and spiritual energies that are the pages, sometimes with lyrical transparencies and reservoirs, written by Hostos; Why doesn't the Secretary of Education place in the hands of each professor, for the good of the school and the native country, without mutilating it, an *Anthology, the essence of Hostos' thought*? Why aren't there accessible, Puerto Rican editions of *Diary, Hostos' proclaims and historical epistles*?

Every Puerto Rican has, despite the general ignorance on Hostos' work, a certain intuition of the greatness and validity of Hostos' message. Not so of Giner.

But Teacher Giner's ideology has an intimate relationship with our noble ideals, with our preaching for justice. Giner will always be an apostle to listen to and follow for those who want to renovate and improve university life and general culture.

Everyone will find in Giner's work, and specifically, in his books titled *La universidad española (University in Spain)* and *Pedagogía universitaria (University pedagogy)* topics for deep meditation and reasons for noble, fertile, and creative incitement. I invite you to turn your look toward that wise man, fair and brilliant teacher who Federico de Onís describes as "a deep spirit..., of religious soul, eternally young (to whom) the rising of the moral and intellectual levels in a part (of Spain) is due."

Giner expresses:

The new University, whose lines are slowly drawn in our time... (hugs) all kinds of education; it is the most elevated institute of cooperative, scientific investigation; it prepares, not only for the diverse social professions, but for life, in its infinite complexity and wealth. At the same time, it stimulates with the vocation of knowledge, intellectual reflection, and the investigation of truth in knowledge, the development of physical energy, the impulse of will, the pure customs, the happiness to live, moral character, healthy taste, worshipping the ideal, the social, practical, and discreet sense in conduct...

That University, continues Giner, with the popular scope provided by students of all ages and classes..., musical audition, games and sports, newspapers, books, circulating library, field trips to the countryside, the museum, the workshop..., deepens into the unity of the national soul, disseminating everywhere the desire for a more human society and life.

Giner refers to *La universidad española* regarding this: "scientific investigation; the making of truth acquired that way; its incorporation into the system of general culture; the transmission and diffusion of this culture...; the moral education of young people, their preparation for certain professions, with other duties that come from here". He thinks that the University "tends to be not only a corporation of students and wise men, but an ethical power

of life". He also explains: "its superior purpose is the comprehensive and ideal formation of man".

According to Giner, the student, not the professor, is the first factor in university life. He considers "calling students to participate in university government a consequence of the concept of corporate institution of teachers and disciples".

In the volume titled *Forjando el porvenir americano* (*Creating the American future*), Puerto Rican educator Hostos protests about what in his day was "a fatuous, thin, university education that paid for itself". He also states, referring to the universities he knew in Europe and America: "instead of providing social reform, the current higher education is worth nothing more than status quo". This is his general impression of education at the end of the nineteenth century: "Higher or university education today judges, lacks ethnic strength, social spirit, and human impulse". It is in that book where the wise Latin American West Indian Puerto Rican praises Giner, Azcárate, and Linares and evokes them as "favorites of the heart and the conscience..., as Spaniards who, with their character, honor the human species."

Hostos' pedagogical message *El propósito de la Normal, Discurso leído en el acto solemne de la investidura de los primeros maestros normalistas de Santo Domingo* (*The purpose of Elementary School, speech read in the solemn act of the investiture of the first elementary school teachers in Santo Domingo, 1884*) reveals ideals that correspond to the ones expressed at the same time by Giner de los Ríos in his *Discurso inaugural del curso de 1880-1881* (Inaugural speech of the 1880-1881 academic year) at the Free Institute of Education in Madrid.

In both oratory pieces, we find the same attitude, the same transcendental concepts, and even a same language. The acclaimed West Indian aspires to awaken the sensibility of the Dominican youth, I quote regarding: "shaping men in the entire energy of virtue, in the plenitude of conscience" and teacher Giner states that the Free Institute aspires to "shape men" and regarding education "in the integrity of destiny", to the "universal, educating, and intimate sense" of education.

Both, the peninsular thinker and the West Indian educator evoke the images of Socrates, Pestalozzi, and Froebel. They both describe the same type of ideal teacher. And if Giner states that the Free Institute wants to shape "useful men at the service of humanity and the native country", Hostos writes about the "brothers of the native country and the brothers of humanity." If Hostos alludes to justice, law, duties, and patriotism, Giner speaks about work, vocation, moral character, and patriotism.

In 1910, Mexican thinker Antonio Caso considers this speech by Hostos, "the master work of independent moral thought in Spanish America."

There is in Hostos and Giner an identical interest for reality and the topic of man, main theme of the lyrical work and essays by Miguel de Unamuno. Even the same phrases surprise us. If Giner writes, for example: "The first duty – and the first pleasure – of each man with himself is being a man," known apothegm of his book *Filosofía y sociología*, Hostos expresses in a repeated aphorism: "Your first duty is to be a man; if you do not comply, you will take your death with you." The thinker from [Mayagüez](#) will put all his moral energy into the realization of his ideal of the complete man.

Even the same love for ineffable music brings them together. Giner, who considers "the creation of beauty an essential dignified purpose for man to dedicate his best and most notable energies to it," he proves his love for music by constantly praising it and with his piano interpretations of Mozart's beauty with wings.

And Hostos who during his youth, wrote revealing pages of fine esthetic sensibility, writes about the creator of the *Pastoral Symphony*, the classic and romantic Beethoven, and writes comments about Mozart, Haydn, and Mendelssohn.

Hostos had, unlike Giner de los Ríos, an openly revolutionary spirit.

Antonio Jiménez-Landi attributes to Manuel B. Cossío these words, similar to others written by professor Federico de Onís:

(Giner) was a radical like no one else; but anti-revolutionary on principle,

And Giner de los Ríos himself confessed:

Because only through the path of ideas and of the work of their interior education, not through the path of revolution... will the people... be reborn... cooperating with the general current of history.

Hostos considered himself a revolutionary. In a letter published in a newspaper in Bilbao on October 24, 1868, he declared:

Revolutionary in the West Indies as I have actively and unselfishly been, am, and will be in the Peninsula; as should be... he who cannot hide from the movement...; revolutionary in the West Indies, necessarily stationary and forced to be prone to move, I want for them what I have wanted for Spain... The first thing I wanted for Spain was dignity... just like the first thing I want for Puerto Rico and Cuba is dignity.

The patriot has this conviction which he comments to his father in a lucid epistle on May 30, 1869. Eugenio María de Hostos:

Only revolutionary efforts can combat despotism.

Gentlemen, I am not praising Hostos' classical importance over the distinguished figure of Giner, nor the teacher from Spain over the universal man from Mayagüez. Giner and his disciples created a true renovation in Spain. With the perspective given by looking at things from our time, Joaquín Xirau has been able to explain that the presence of Giner was unprecedented and revolutionary in Spain. Luis Jiménez de Asúa said the founder of the Free Institute was a revolutionary who was deep into his modesty and humbleness, tenacious revolutionary. Giner, who lost his professorship when he supported Sanz del Río, was the guiding voice in protesting against Marqués de Orovio's decree, attempting against academic freedom. Giner was taken to prison at the Santa Catalina Castle in Cádiz for having replied with dignity to the person who visited him, in the name of Cánovas, to tell him that Orovio's decree would not have effectiveness. Giner answered, "tell Cánovas to tell me that in La Gaceta and not to expect an indignity from me." And that extraordinary man was taken to the prison at Santa Catalina Castle; Juan Ramón Jiménez said of him: "the smelting light... of his burned being (added) glow to the day". He suffered like a revolutionary. That is where the secular saint conceived the Free Institute. Both of them, Hostos and Giner, made equal efforts in the moral revolution. Alfonso Reyes, traced these characteristics of who Antonio Machado called:

...the brother of the light of dawn,
Of the sun of workshops,
The happy old man of the saint life.

"He was a Krausist – are the words of the distinguished Mexican – he was a man of apostolic temperament". It is said that he said he exercised the sacrament of words...; he was, according to Alfonso Reyes, "gardener of souls".

We can express almost the same concepts of Alfonso Reyes when we try to draw the profile of this other apostle of our countries' education, culture, liberty, and sovereignty. Visionary of the Federation of the Antilles, in love with Bolivar's dream, Teacher of Latin

America, jurist and abolitionist like Giner, man who evoked the memory of Socrates, and is, like Giner, a moralist. Giner wrote *Estudios de literatura y arte*, Hostos passed down valuable work of literary and esthetic critique such as Hamlet. He was a liberator of apostolic temperament.

Today we invoke the names of Hostos and Giner so that they encourage us to enter the full life of culture, decorum, justice, and liberty.